



# 2023 SYRAH PRIMA DONNA

## TASTING NOTES

The Prima Donna bursts out of the glass, as you would expect from someone who wants to be on stage. Bright, juicy aromas bring to mind a ruby sequined dress – maybe even one that’s a little bit see-through, like the medium robe of this wine. That big bright electric plum deliciousness carries into the mouth, with added complexity and some darker notes of cherry and chocolate. Not your usual restrained Syrah, she’s full of excitement.

*Smooth/full-bodied; medium acid, medium tannin. Brighter, redder fruit than a typical Syrah, spicy notes from VI.*

## WINEMAKER’S NOTES

Cofermenting Syrah with Viognier is a traditional practice in southern France that has been adopted by many new world winemakers. “Cofermentation” sounds fancy but it just means fermenting grapes of multiple varieties together in one vat. We add the crushed, destemmed Viognier grapes directly to the fermentor with the Syrah, which makes for a dramatic visual as well as a dramatic wine. Including the skins of the Viognier in the fermentation brings some additional tannin to the party and adds some aromatics and flavors that you just won’t find in straight varietal Syrah. The remarkable thing about this wine is that it takes traditional cofermentation and turns it up to 11, with 11% of the grapes being Viognier instead of the more-common 1-3%.

### Composition

89% Syrah & 11% Viognier

### Appellation

Rattlesnake Hills (but labeled with the inclusive Yakima Valley appellation)

### Vineyard

Sugarloaf Vineyard

### Crush Pad

Destem and light crush

### Saignee

10%

### Yeast

D254

### Fermentation

Small open-top fermentors, punched down by hand

### Time on skins

18 days

### Aging

16 months in barrels

### Oak

13%

### Fining/Filtration

Cross-flow filtration

### Alcohol

14.5%

### Production

237 cases

### Bottled

February 5, 2025



eleven



## PAIRINGS

Pair this cheeky wine with pork anything (add in a cherry reduction for some fancy), kale lasagna or Cubano sandwiches. Or, fire up the grill! Prima Donna likes drama, so get a nice char going on those veggies and serve with spareribs or other barbecue. When you are at the winery, try it with some of our smoked salmon, blue cheese, or chocolate. Also great at intermission at the opera (after sneaking it in in a flask). ;)

## VINTAGE DETAILS

The 2023 vintage got off to a late, cool start, but then raced ahead with warm temperatures, making up ground throughout the growing season and even tracking slightly ahead of average by mid-July. A brief heat spike in August caused issues in some varieties but didn't slow down the speeding train of ripening. Harvest started off with a fury, bringing home one variety after another day after day. Yields were widely variable, and things were changing so quickly that yield forecasts sometimes turned out to be significantly higher or lower than expected when the grapes were harvested. This means that we got more of some varieties than expected, and less of others. The good news is that the quality was very good in nearly everything, so we are expecting some great wines from the vintage.

## GRAPE VARIETY INFO

Syrah is a lower-tannin, high color red variety, and tannin helps stabilize color, so some have theorized that cofermenting Syrah with Viognier (which has no red color but some tannin) might help stabilize some of that color. This may be true, but adding the colorless Viognier juice tends to dilute the effect (back to normal color levels ;-). The historical reason for cofermenting the two likely has more to do with adding a little lift to cool-climate Syrah from its native France.

## FUN FACTS

Since different varieties ripen at different times, and the same variety grown in different locations (even just a few miles apart) will ripen differently, one of the challenges of making this wine is getting the Syrah and Viognier together in the fermentors.

## AWARDS

Not entered into competitions.



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